



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Washington, DC 20240

SEP 23 2003

Memorandum

To: Secretary

From: Earl E. Devaney
Inspector General

Subject: Follow-up Assessment of Security at the National Park Service's Icon Parks

This report contains the results of a two-day assessment of the security of the National Park Service icon parks along the National Mall in Washington, D. C., and may be referred to as an addendum to the Office of Inspector General's *Review of National Icon Park Security* report. The icons detailed in this report have been designated as key Departmental assets and were scrutinized during a period in which heightened security should have been in place, due to the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

In the wake of my two most recent reports, as well as the U. S. Secret Service's *National Mall Security Assessment*, which evaluated and offered suggestions concerning the betterment of national icon park security, I was surprised to find this assessment revealing a continued lack of effort in the protection practices for the National Mall, which certainly raises grave concerns for the security and public safety at these facilities.

Results

Wednesday, September 10, 2003

The National Park Service (NPS) continues to provide inadequate protection, deterrence, and security measures at their designated icon parks along the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Based on what was witnessed during the two days that comprised this assessment, there appears to be an overall, persistent and severe deficiency in the presence of Park Police officers throughout the National Mall. Non-law enforcement rangers were clearly visible but, frequently, even these personnel remained predominantly in groups and did not provide full coverage and surveillance of monuments or memorials. In fact, throughout these visits, it was apparent that all facets of security personnel, including Park Police, park rangers, and contract security screeners, have a propensity to gather and remain in groups as opposed to dispersing individually throughout the park grounds in order to conduct more efficient surveillance and protection (**Exhibit 1**). For example, four rangers stood and talked in a group at the entranceway to one of the monuments for roughly ten minutes; at the time, these were the only visible security personnel on site (**Exhibit 2**). In plain sight were two vacant police cruisers, side-by-side near the front of the monument, which may arguably provide some deterrence against potential attack, but there was no sign of any patrolling or posted officers anywhere throughout the hour-long duration of this particular visit.

A red, unmarked vehicle, occupied by an individual presumed by our team to be a plainclothes officer, was backed up against the concrete barriers surrounding the perimeter of one monument throughout the entirety of our visit (**Exhibit 3**). If this person was, in fact, a plainclothes officer, his presence alone does not necessarily provide sufficient deterrence. Moreover, if this person was not an officer, he remained in his vehicle for the length of our assessment, so close to the monument, yet was not approached, from what our team could determine, by any police officers or security personnel. In fact, there appeared to be no obvious law enforcement presence during this period whatsoever.

One member of the assessment team participated in a group tour inside one of the monuments. At this particular monument, there exists a screening booth housing a magnetometer, through which all visitors must pass, monitored by security personnel. Just beyond the initial checkpoint, and prior to actually entering the monument, the team member witnessed three Park Police officers sitting together and talking with security personnel. These officers were never witnessed entering the monument and, twenty minutes later following the completion of the tour, the team member, upon exiting, saw the same three officers still seated just past the security checkpoint inside the monument. These officers never exited the monument during the duration of this visit.

Upon arriving at another memorial near lunchtime, a group of approximately five Park Police officers were standing casually by the barricaded gates near the front of the memorial (**Exhibit 4**). They remained there, from what our team could observe, for roughly five minutes. After completing a full perimeter walk of the entire memorial, our

team encountered no other visible Park Police presence. Inside the memorial itself, our team witnessed only one unarmed roving park ranger. Upon completion of the perimeter walk, there remained only two Park Police officers, seated in side-by-side cruisers, by the front gate (**Exhibit 5**). The other officers that had been part of the group casually standing by the gate upon our team's arrival were nowhere in sight. A second perimeter walk, only forty-five minutes later, confirmed the lack of Park Police presence.

Thursday, September 11, 2003

On this day, the assessment team revisited the same parks from the day before. The first monument was visited from 1:15 p.m. to 2 p.m. Again, while there was park ranger presence, these rangers remained primarily toward the front of the monument, either in a fixed position at the monument's entrance or organizing tourists into lines prior to having them tour the monument. Throughout this time, there was no visible Park Police presence. There was, in fact, an unmarked car parked down by the street entrance of the memorial upon our team's arrival; however, the individual behind the wheel appeared to be sound asleep (**Exhibit 6**).

One team member acquired a black, plastic trash bag from a nearby trash receptacle, filled it with garbage, and carried it through the concrete barriers surrounding the monument and across the monument's base, uncontested and presumably unobserved. At the rear of the monument, the plastic trash bag was placed at the monument's base and remained there, undisturbed, for roughly twenty minutes (**Exhibits 7, 8, and 9**). There was not a single security or law enforcement official who, in that time, came around to the rear of the monument. It was readily apparent that, due to the lack of security in this specific vicinity, the rear of the monument poses as a definite vulnerability.

After twenty minutes, the bag was removed by our team and placed, this time, against the front of the monument, where the monument meets the security checkpoint portico (**Exhibit 10**). Again, the unidentified bag sat there, undisrupted and unnoticed, for roughly fifteen minutes. Upon retrieval of the trash bag, and to better illustrate the park's lack of acuity, one team member was able to walk up to the window of the security terminal and snap a photograph of the back of a lone Park Police officer's head without being noticed (**Exhibit 11**).

Although a lone trash bag should appear suspicious, our team also witnessed a lack of security measures that might theoretically enable less obvious objects containing potentially destructive materials too close to the monument. For example, child strollers were left unchecked and unmonitored beside the entranceway of one particular monument (**Exhibit 12**). This could provide an efficient and adequate transport for negotiating a weapon or explosives into the park, enabling it to be placed directly up against the foundation of the monument. Similarly, there are sections at this specific monument that maintain exposed air vents that, due to a lack of visible security, can be easy targets and are quite vulnerable to various forms of attack.

Later in the day, upon revisiting one of the day's previous memorials, our team witnessed only one Park Police officer outside on park grounds—and this officer was initially spotted purchasing or receiving a kite from an individual on the park lawn. The officer was then followed up to the base of the monument, where he entered and did not exit throughout the duration of our visit. After waiting for roughly an hour without observing any further Park Police presence, one team member approached a park ranger at the foot of the monument and casually questioned this individual as to the location of nearby Park Police. The ranger said, "There's no Park Police out here," then suggested that if we desired to see Park Police officers, we should visit a different monument. "There are some Park Police inside [the monument]," the ranger maintained, "but they won't come out here."

Simply stated, the NPS and the Park Police have yet to adequately identify and address their security weaknesses at the National Mall, or have such complacency about their role that it causes us to question their value and purpose. It appears that at each memorial visited the NPS and Park Police continue to ignore their own minimum staffing requirements. Too often the assessment team observed unoccupied posts where roving or stationary officers should have been present. Moreover, it was particularly disturbing to find these vulnerabilities on a day when security and awareness should have been heightened, given the anniversary of one of America's most horrific and tragic attacks. This lack of progress continues to confound us, particularly since these issues were already detailed in the release of the most recent national icon assessment report, as well as the report prepared by the U. S. Secret Service.



Exhibit 1



Exhibit 2

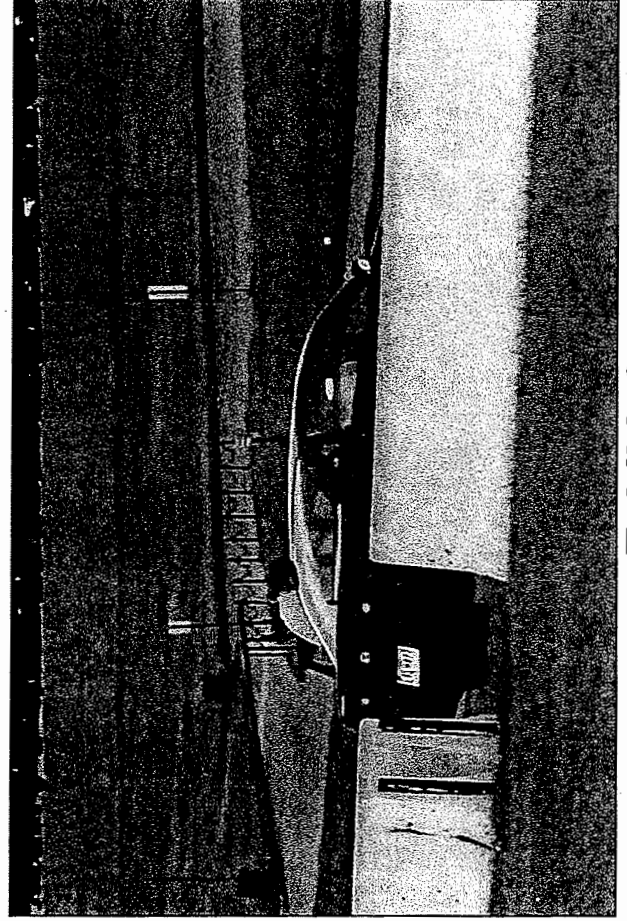


Exhibit 3

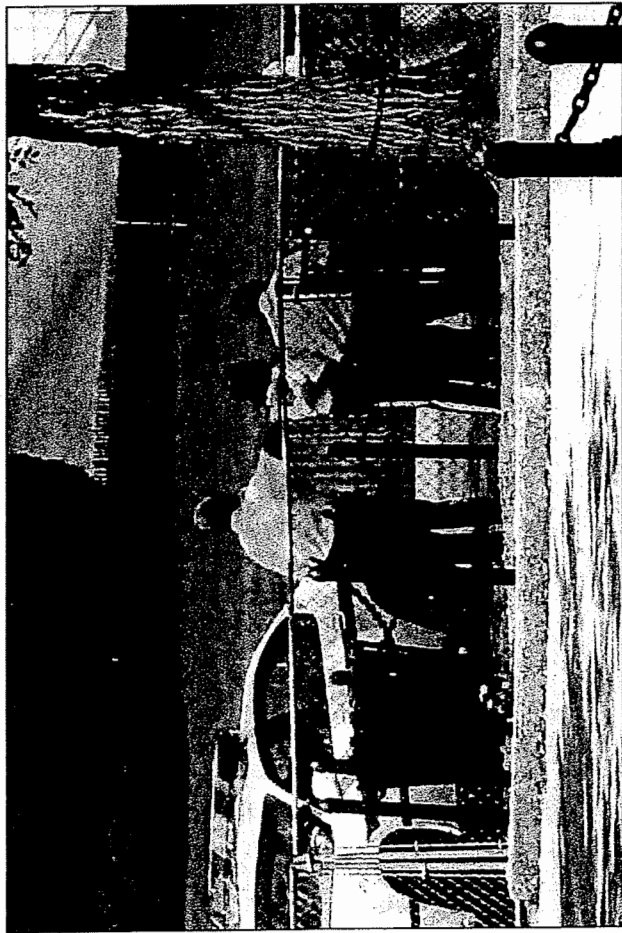


Exhibit 4



Exhibit 5



Exhibit 6

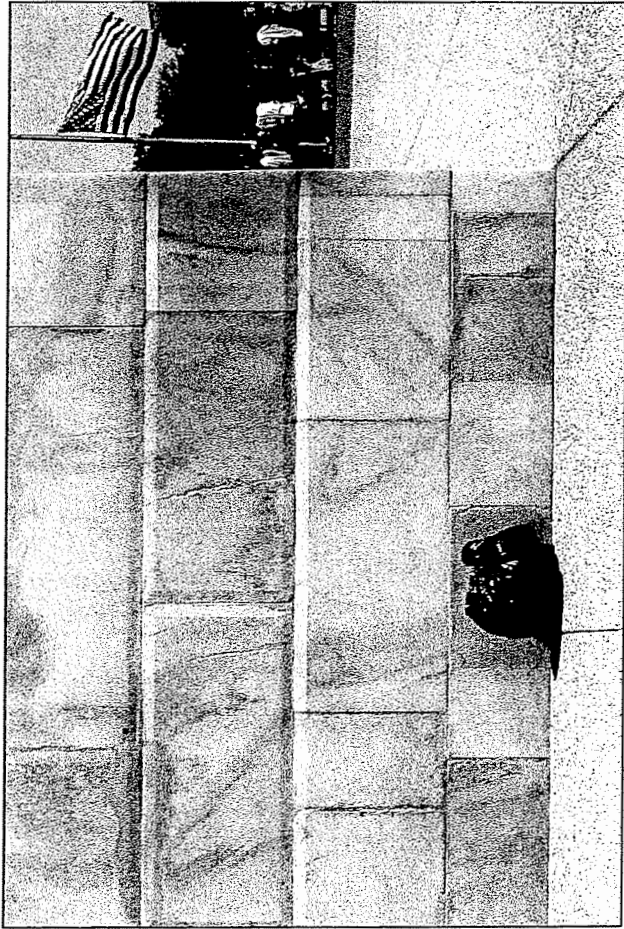


Exhibit 7

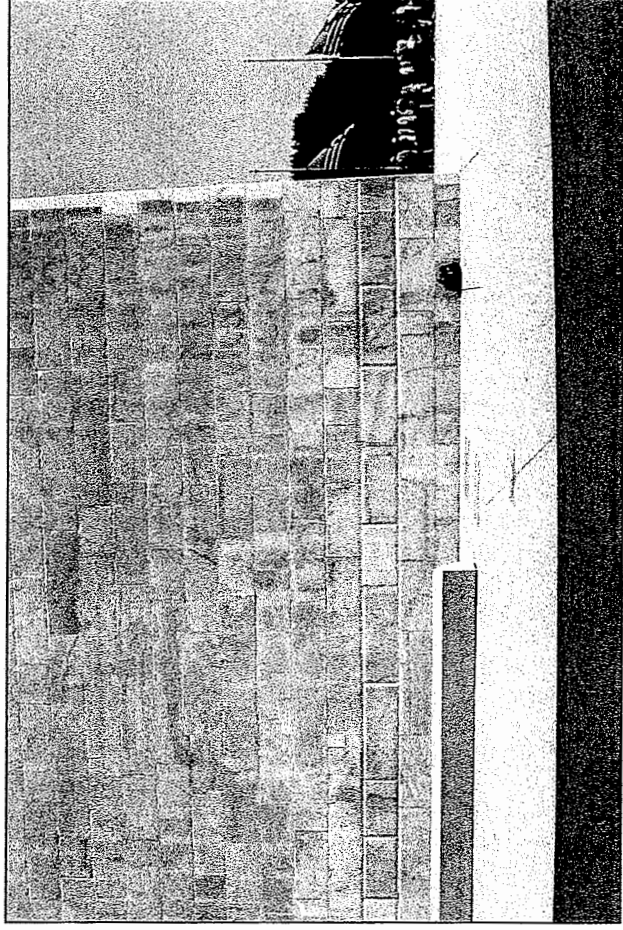


Exhibit 8

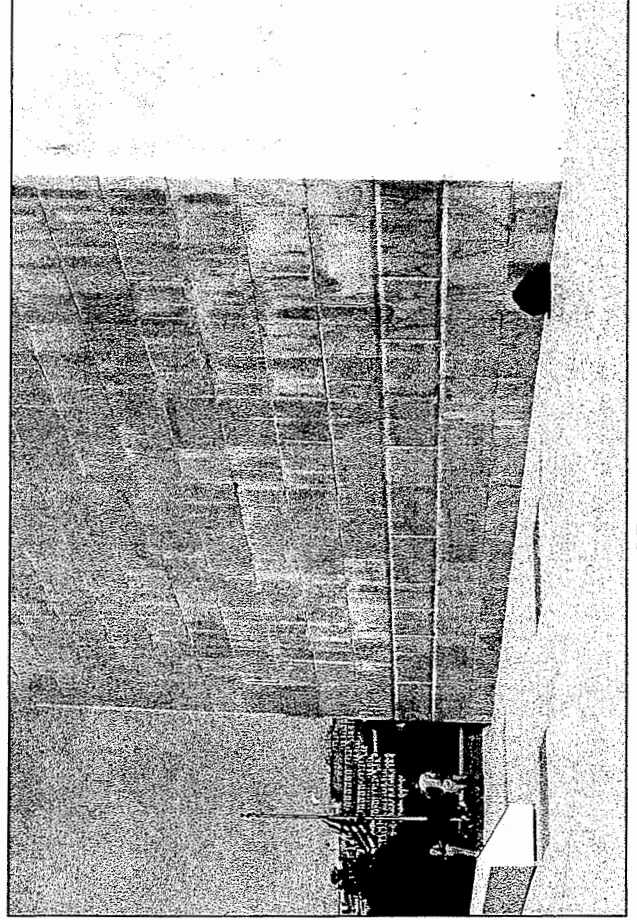


Exhibit 9

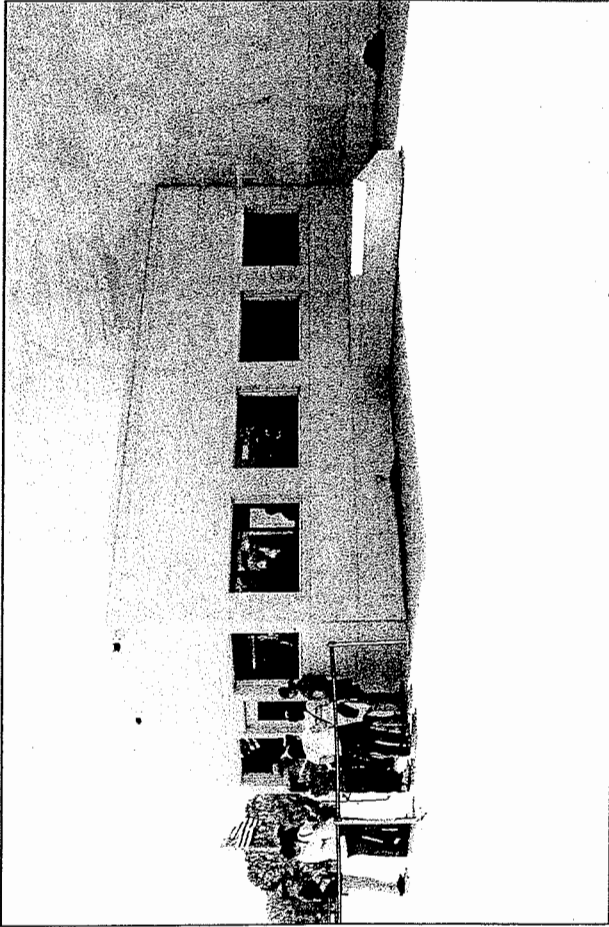


Exhibit 10

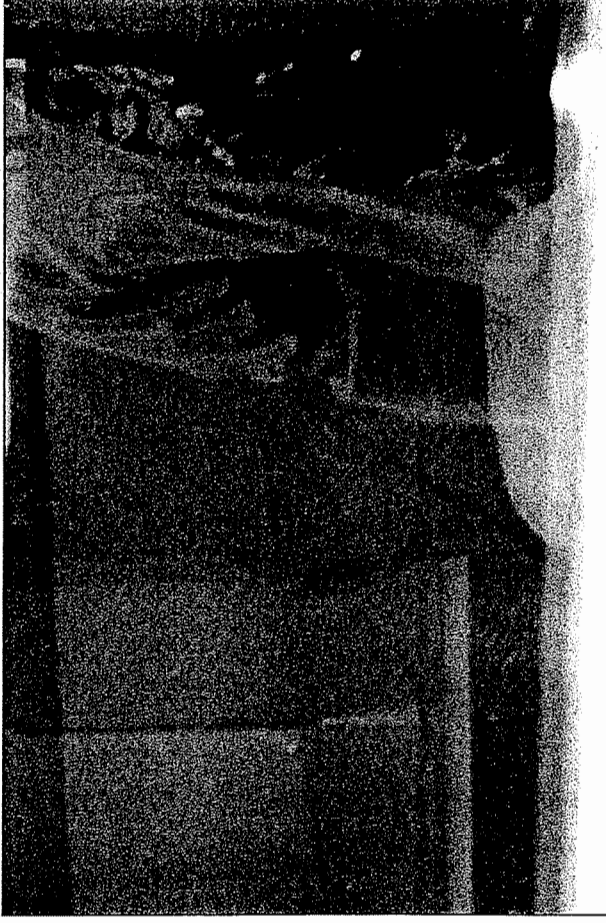


Exhibit 11

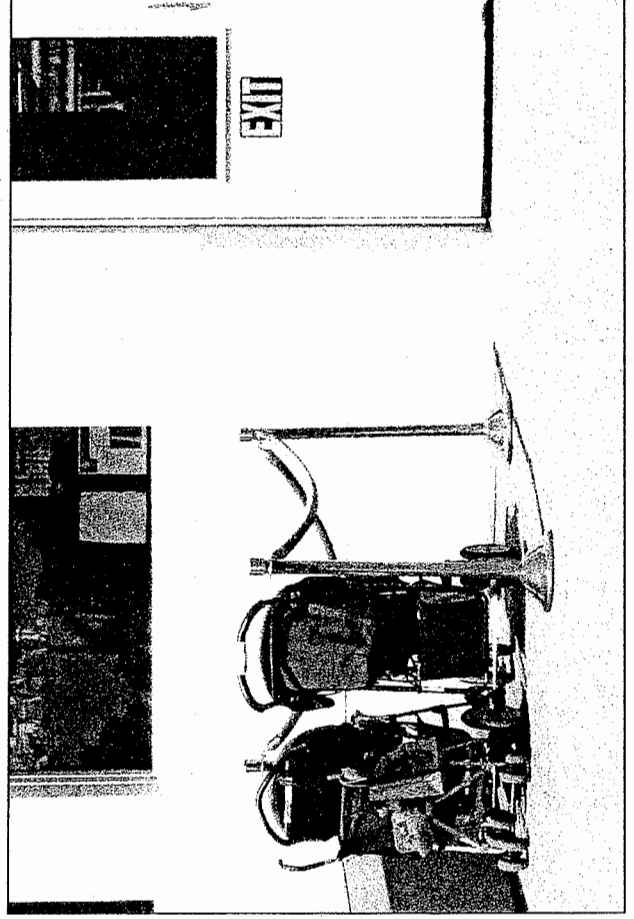


Exhibit 12